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Remarks

Claims 1-30 are pending in this application. According to the Summary page of the Office Action, claims 1-25, 27, 28 and 30 have been rejected, and claims 26 and 29 are objected to, although the body of the Office Action also provides a prior art rejection of claims 26 and 29.

In response to this Office Action, claims 1-11 have been cancelled in order to expedite prosecution and without prejudice to further presentment of the subject matter of these claims in a later continuation application. Other claims have been amended to more precisely describe the invention and define the invention over the cited prior art.

Claims 12-19 were rejected as being anticipated by Sakikawa et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,333,451. Independent claim 12 has been amended to specifically define the structure of the valve block in a manner that is not shown in the Sakikawa reference. Specifically, claim 12 now requires that the ports be formed in different sides of the valve block and the third port extends entirely through at least one of the first and second ports. The third port is also formed in a third side perpendicular to the first and second sides. Such a structure can be seen, *e.g.* in Fig. 10 of the application.

This is different from the Sakikawa reference, which shows a valve block having a t-shaped third port that is a significantly more complicated design than in the present claim 12. In the Sakikawa reference, this third port does not open on a third side perpendicular to the first and second ports nor does the third port extend through at least one of the other ports. Rather, the portion of the third port terminates in both of the first and second ports. Again, this is a more complicated design and there is no suggestion or teaching to modify the Sakikawa reference in a manner that would render this amended claim anticipated or obvious. Therefore, claim 12 is

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allowable. Claims 13-16 are dependent from claim 12 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons.

Claim 17 has also been rejected as being anticipated by the Sakikawa reference. This claim has been amended to specifically claim multiple housings including a separate pump and motor housing mounted on the vehicle where the hydraulic lines are external to both of the housings. Claim 17 also requires the third port to extend entirely through one of the other ports. Such structure is also not shown in the Sakikawa reference and it is believed that claim 17 and its dependent claims 18-22 are allowable for this reason.

Independent claim 23 was rejected as being anticipated by Mangano et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,295,811. It is first noted that the Mangano reference does not give any specific detail about block B2 on which the Examiner is relying. The discussion of block B1 in the specification makes it clear that the hydraulic lines 112 and 114 do not extend into element 10 shown in Figs. 1-3 in the Mangano '822 patent.

Claim 23 has been amended to specify that the plane of the first port passage is different from the plane of the second port passage, when both planes are perpendicular to the first and third sides of the valve block. This embodiment is shown in, *e.g.*, Figs. 3 and 4 of the application. No such structure is shown or suggested in Mangano or any of the other cited patents. Therefore, claim 23 is allowable, along with dependent claims 24 and 25.

Independent claim 26 has also been rejected as being anticipated by Mangano. This claim has been amended to provide that the valve ports do not extend through the entire body of the valve block, so that the first valve port is open on a first side of the valve block and does not extend through to the opposite side, and the second valve port is formed on the opposite side and does not extend through to the first side. Such a structure is not shown or suggested in Mangano

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or any of the other prior art references, and claim 26 and its dependent claims 27 and 28 are therefore allowable.

Claim 29 has been rejected as being anticipated by Mangano et al. This claim has also been amended in a manner similar to claim 23 to provide that the port passages are in different planes. Therefore, claim 29 and 30 are allowable over these prior art references.

It is believed that Applicant has addressed all of the outstanding matters and it is requested that this application be granted a Notice of Allowance at the earliest possible date. Please contact the undersigned attorney if there are any questions. Any fees required by this Response may be charged to our firm's Deposit Account No. 502,261.

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Certificate of Mailing: The undersigned hereby certifies that this document and its enclosures are being faxed to the Commissioner for Patents, 703/872-9306 on May 5, 2005.

By: 

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